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process that involves geology and hydrogeology." While officials considered four sites, various factors eliminated two options.

"We looked at proximity to other wells and contamination sources. We had to consider future possible development. We wanted to make sure there was no possibility of surface water contamination, that there were no problems with on-site sewer systems," Hemerka said.

The goal, she said, is to find a water source that is pollutant-free and can provide sufficient quantity.

Officials have narrowed down the well options to two sites. Both locations are outside the borough, and tests are proceeding on one of the sites.

Mitch Cron, the EPA's remedial project manager, said the state Department of Environmental Protection has permitted an aquifer pumping test to evaluate whether the well will yield a sufficient quantity of water quickly enough to supply the borough's needs.

"We need to look at what effect a new pumping well would have on the current contaminated, and make sure we have good confidence that we won't draw the contamination into a new well."

One factor that could delay bringing a new well online is the time it takes to obtain permits necessary for the construction of a pipeline connecting the source to the borough's water system, Cron said.

The borough has hired an independent hydrogeologist to evaluate the tests and water quality.

American Household Inc. is conducting feasibility studies to determine a plan to treat the pollution. "EPA has a court order that they have to pump that well until it is clean," Hemerka says.

The EPA's goal is to reduce the level to between 3 parts per billion and 6 parts per billion.

"The responsible party has indicated that the current treatment available for 1,4-dioxin can reliably treat the water without creating other harmful byproducts," Cron said. "However, more definitive studies to prove this and to see if a treatment can be engineered properly are needed to solve the problem."

Until a new well is hooked up to Bally's water system, residents will continue receiving water supplied by American Household Inc.

Martha Gehringer is a freelance writer.

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